

BONNIE JOANN

VIOLET JACOB

Mary Cavendish

BONNIE JOANN

BY VIOLET JACOB

SONGS *of* ANGUS

FIFTH IMPRESSION

"THE dialect is Angus, and in every song there is the sound of the east wind and the rain. . . . She has many moods, from the stalwart humour of 'The Beadle o' Drumlee' and 'Jeemsie Miller' to the haunting lilt of 'The Gean-Trees' and the pathos of 'Craigie Woods' and 'The Lang Road,' but in them all are the same clarity of vision and clear beauty of phrase."

From MR. JOHN BUCHAN'S *Preface*.

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BONNIE JOANN

AND OTHER POEMS

BY VIOLET JACOB

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WILLIAM KENNEDY-ERSKINE

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V. J.

BONNIE JOANN

AND OTHER POEMS

BONNIE JOANN

WE'VE stookit the hairst an' we're needin'
 To gaither it in,
Syne, gin the morn's dry, we'll be leadin'
 An' wark'll begin ;
But noo I'll awa doon the braeside
 My lane, while I can—
Wha kens wha he'll meet by the wayside,
 My bonnie Joann ?

East yonder, the hairst-fields are hidin'
 The sea frae my een,
Gin ye keek whaur the stooks are dividin'
 Ye'll see it atween.
Sae douce an' sae still it has sleepit
 Since hairst-time began
Like my he'rt—gin ye'd tak' it an' keep it
 My bonnie Joann.

Owre a'thing the shadows gang trailin',
Owre stubble an' strae ;
Frae the hedge to the fit o' the pailin'
They rax owre the way ;
But the sun may gang through wi' his beamin'
An' traivel his span,
For aye, by the licht o' my dreamin',
I see ye, Joann.

Awa frae ye, naebody's braver,
Mair wise-like an' bauld,
Aside ye, I hech an' I haver,
I'm het an' I'm cauld ;
But oh ! could I tell wi'out speakin'
The he'rt o' a man,
Ye micht find I'm the lad that ye're seekin',
My bonnie Joann !

THE WIND FRAE THE BALTIC

BELOW the wa's, oot-by Montrose,
The tides ca' up an' doon
And mony's the gallant mairchantman
Lies in aside the toon ;
Oh, it's fine alang the tideway
The loupin' waters rin
When the wind is frae the Baltic wi' the brigs
comin' in.

I'd gie the ring upon my hand
To hide me frae the sea
That manes by nicht an' cries by day
The dule that's come to me,
For I'll hear nae mair the fit-fa'
When hame the brigs may win
O' a man that sailed the Baltic, nor his step
comin' in.

4 THE WIND FRAE THE BALTIC

And noo the toon is fair asteer,

 The weans rin doon the street,

And I may turn my face aboot

 An' get me hame to greet,

There's sic a joy wi' a' fowk

 My tears wad be a sin,

For the wind is frae the Baltic—an' the brigs
 comin' in.

THE TRAMP TO THE TATTIE-DULIE

THRAWN-LEGGIT carle wi' airms on hie
And jist a hole for ilka ee,
Ye needna lift yer hand to me
 As though ye'd strike me ;
Ye're threits abune an' strae below,
But what-like use is sic a show ?
Ye maun respec' me, bogle, tho'
 Ye mauna like me !

To gutsy doo or thievin' craw
Ye mebbe represent the law
When they come fleein' owre the wa'
 To tak' an airin',
Dod, I'll no say they arena richt
When sic a fell, unchancy sicht
Gars them think twice afore they licht—
 But *I'm* no carin' !

6 THE TRAMP TO THE TATTIE-DULIE

Yer heid's a neep,¹ yer wame's ² a sack,
Yer ill-faured face gars bairnies shak',
But yet the likes o' you can mak'

A livin' frae it ;

Sma' use to me ! It isna fair
For though there's mony wad declare
That I'm no far ahint ye there,
I canna dae it !

Life's a disgust wi' a' its ways,
For free o' chairge ye get yer claes,
Nae luck hae I on washin'-days—

There's plenty dryin',

But gin I see a usefu' sark
An' bide or gloamin' help my wark,
The guidwife's oot afore it's dark—
And leaves nane lyin'.

Weel, weel, I'm aff. It's little pleasure
To see ye standin' at yer leisure
When I've sae mony miles to measure
To get a meal !

¹ Turnip.

² Belly.

Ye idle dog ! My bonnet's through,
An' yours is no exac'ly new,
But a' the same I'll hae't frae you,
And faur-ye-weel !

HALLOWE'EN

THE tattie-liftin's nearly through,
They're ploughin' whaur the barley grew,
 And aifter dark, roond ilka stack,
 Ye'll see the horsemen stand an' crack
O Lachlan, but I mind o' you !

I mind foo often we hae seen
Ten thoosand stars keek doon atween
 The nakit branches, an' below
 Baith fairm an' bothie hae their show,
Alowe wi' lights o' Hallowe'en.

There's bairns wi' guizards ¹ at their tail
Clourin' the doors wi' runts ² o' kail,
 And fine ye'll hear the skreichs an' skirls
 O' lassies wi' their droukit curls
Bobbin' for aipples i' the pail.

¹ Mummers who go from door to door.

² Cabbage-stalks.

The bothie fire is loupin' het,
A new heid horseman's kist is set
 Richts o' the lum ; whaur by the blaze
 The auld ane stude that kept yer claes—
I canna thole to see it yet !

But gin the auld fowks' tales are richt
An ghaists come hame on Hallow nicht,
 O freend o' freends ! what wad I gie
 To feel ye rax yer hand to me
Atween the dark an' caun'le licht ?

Awa in France, across the wave,
The wee lights burn on ilka grave,
 An' you an' me their lowe hae seen—
 Ye'll mebbe hae yer Hallowe'en
Yont, whaur ye're lyin' wi' the lave.

There's drink an' daffin', sang an' dance
And ploys and kisses get their chance,
 But Lachlan, man, the place I see
 Is whaur the auld kist used to be
And the lights o' Hallowe'en in France !

ADAM

YE'RE richt weel buskit, yer poke is fu',
Ye ride i' yer ain machine ;
'Twould tak a fule to hae words wi' you
An' no ken the gowk he's been.

At rowp or preachin' the best ye'll hae,
This world or the neist ane's gear,
The breist ¹ o' the laft on a Sawbath day,
Or a seat by the auctioneer.

Ye're no jist auld an' ye arena young,
But it doesna affec' the case,
For I'm aye that fear'd o' a wumman's tongue
That I'm like to forget her face.

¹ The front seat in the gallery.

An' fowk says " Donal', ye're forty past,
I doot she'll be fifty-three,
But ye maun settle yersel' at last
That hasna a spare bawbee.

Oh, youth's a ploy, but it winna bide
And a body's gettin' on—
What ails ye, man, at a thrifty bride
Wi' a dandy bit hoose like yon ? "

Them's wise-like bodies I hae to thank
And mebbe they're no far wrang ;
But whiles ye'll step frae a creakin' plank
An' doon i' the glaur¹ ye'll gang !

It's warm, thae nichts, i' the auld King's Heid ;
What better can ye desire
Than a lass to bring ye the dram ye need
An' yer billies aroond the fire ?

An' wha is't redes me to tak' a wife ?
A puckle o' single men !
No ane, I'm thinkin', wad risk his life
Wi' a jaud that he disna ken !

¹ Mud.

I'll wish ye luck an' a braw guidman,
And weel may ye baith agree,
But I'm no seekin' ye, Maggie-Ann,
And I doot that he'll no be me !

THE DAFT BIRD

WHEN day is past an' peace comes doon wi'
gloamin'

An' twa by twa the young fowk pass the yett,
Auld stocks like me maun let their thochts
content them,

Mindin' o' coortin's that they'll no forget.
Ye're no sae far awa the nicht, my Marget,
Tho' on the brae-heid, past the dyke ye lie,
Whaur ae daft bird is singin' i' the kirkyaird
And ae star watches i' the evenin' sky.

Late bird, daft bird, the likes o' you are bedded,
The daylight's deid, it's hame that ye should
be,
Yer voice is naucht to them that canna hear ye ;
But sing you on, it isna naucht to me.

Dod, like yersel', it's time that I was sleepin',
Sae lang it is since Marget laid her doon,
And ilka year treids up ahint anither
Like evenin's ghaist ahint the aifternoon.

For rest comes slaw to you an' me, I'm thinkin',
Oor day's wark's surely lang o' wearin'
through,
The gloamin's had been wearier an' langer,
Thae nichts o' June, late warker, wantin'
you.

I maun hae patience yet, I'll no be grievin',
There's them that disna fail tho' day be spent,
An' yon daft bird's aye singing i' the kirkyaird—
Lord, I will bide my time, an' bide content.

PRIDE

DID iver ye see the like o' that ?
The world's fair fashioned to winder at !
Heuch—dinna tell me ! Yon's Fishie Pete
That cried the haddies in Ferry Street
Set up wi' his coats an' his grand cigars
In ane o' they stinkin' motor-cars !

I mind the time (an' it's no far past)
When he wasna for fleein' along sae fast
An' doon i' the causey his cairt wad stand
As he roared oot " Haddies ! " below his hand ;
Ye'd up wi' yer windy an' doon he'd loup
Frae the shaft o' the cairt by the sheltie's doup.

Aye, muckle cheenges an' little sense,
A bawbee's wut an' a poond's pretence !
For there's him noo wi' his neb to the sky
I' yon deil's machinery swiggit¹ by,

¹ Croup.

² Swung, whirled.

An' me, that whiles gi'ed him a piece to eat,
Tramps aye to the kirk on my ain twa feet.

And, nee'bours, mind ye, the warld's a-gley
Or we couldna see what we've seen the day,
Guid fortune's blate whaur she's weel desairv't
The sinner fu' an' the godly stairv't,
An' fowk like me an' my auld guidman
Jist wearied, daein' the best we can !

I've kept my lips an' my tongue frae guile
An' kept mysel' to mysel' the while ;
Agin a' wastrels I've aye been set
And I'm no for seekin' to thole them yet ;
A grand example I've been through life,
A righteous liver, a thrifty wife.

But oh ! the he'rt o' a body bleeds
For favours sclarried ¹ on sinfu' heids.
Wait you a whilie ! Ye needna think
They'll no gang frae him wi' cairds an' drink !
They'll bring nae blessin', they winna bide,
For the warst sin, nee'bours, is pride, aye, pride !

¹ Spilt.

‘ KIRRIE ’

COMIN’ oot frae Kirrie, when the autumn gowd an’
siller

At the hindmaist o’ September month has
grips o’ tree an’ shaw,

The mune hung, deaved wi’ sunset, no a spunk o’
pride in till her,

Nae better nor a bogle, till the licht was awa ;
An’ the haughs below the Grampains, i’ the
evenin’ they were lyin’

Like a lang-socht Land o’ Promise that the
cauld mist couldna smoor ;

An’ tho’ ye didna see it, ye could hear the river
cryin’

If ye stood a while to listen on the road to
Kirriemuir.

There’s an auld wife bides in Kirrie—set her up !
a pridefu’ crater—

And she’s crackin’ aye o’ London an’ the
grand fowk ye may see ;

O' the King, an' syne his palace, till I'm sure I'm
like to hate her,

For the mairket-day in Kirrie is the sight for
me.

But ye ken I'm sweir to fash her, an' it's best to
be agreein',

For gin ye dinna heed her, then she's cankered-
like an' soor,

Dod, she tells o' muckle lairmin'—but I doot the
bizzar's ¹ leein',

For it's fules wad bide in London when they
kent o' Kirriemuir.

O, the braw, braw toon o' Kirrie! What a years
that I hae lo'ed it!

And I winna seek to leave it tho' I'm spared
anither score;

I'd be greetin' like a laddie for the auld reid
hooses croodit

Lookin' down upon the steadin's and the
fields o' Strathmore.

¹ Jade.

Ye may speak o’ heavenly mansions, ye may say
it wadna grieve ye

When ye quit a world sae bonnie—but I
canna jist be sure,

For I’ll hae to wait, I’m thinkin’, or I see if I
believe ye,

For my first braid blink o’ Heaven, an’ my
last o’ Kirriemuir !

THE END O'T

THERE'S a fine braw thistle that lifts its croon

By the river-bank whaur the ashes stand,
An' the swirl o' water comes whisp'rin' doon
Past birk an' bramble an' grazin' land.

But simmer's flittit an' time's no heedin'

A feckless lass nor a pridefu' flow'r ;
The dark to hide me's the grace I'm needin',
An' the thistle's seedin'
An' my day's owre.

I redd the hoose an' I meat the hens

(Oh, it's ill to wark when ye daurna tire !)
An' what'll I get when my mither kens
It's niver a maiden that biggs her fire ?
I mind my pray'rs, but I'm feared to say them,
I hide my een, for they're greetin' fast,
What though I blind them—for wha wad hae them?
The licht's ga'en frae them
An' my day's past.

Oh, wha tak's tent for a fadin' cheek ?

No him, I'se warrant, that gar'd it fade !

There's little love for a lass to seek

When the coortin's through an' the price is
paid.

Oh, aince forgotten's forgotten fairly,

An' heavy endit what's licht begun,

But God forgie ye an' keep ye, Chairlie,

For the nicht's fa'en airly

An' my day's done !

THE KELPIE

I'm feared o' the road ayont the glen,
I'm sweir to pass the place
Whaur the water's rinnin', for a' fowk ken
There's a kelpie sits at the fit o' the den,
And there's them that's seen his face.

But whiles he watches an' whiles he hides
And whiles, gin na wind manes,
Ye can hear him roarin' frae whaur he bides
An' the soond o' him splashin' agin the sides
O' the rocks an' the muckle stanes.

When the mune gaes doon at the arn-tree's back
In a wee, wee weary licht,
My bed-claes up to my lugs I tak',
For I mind the swirl o' the water black
An' the cry i' the fearsome nicht.

And lang an' fell is yon road to me
As I come frae the schule ;
I duarna think what I'm like to see
When dark fa's airly on buss an' tree
At Martinmas and Yule.

Aside the crusie ¹ my mither reads,
“ My bairn,” says she, “ ye've heard
The Lord is mindfu' o' a' oor needs
An' His shield an' buckler's abune the heids
O' them that keeps His word.”

But I'm a laddie that's no that douce,
An' fechtin's a bonnie game ;
The dominie's pawmies ² are little use,
An' mony's the Sawbath I'm rinnin' loose
When a'body thinks I'm hame !

Dod, noo we're nearin' the shorter days,
It's cannie I'll hae to gang,
An' keep frae fechtin' an' sic-like ways,
And no be tearin' my Sawbath claes
Afore that the nichts grow lang.

¹ Iron oil-lamp.

² Canings.

Richt guid an' couthie I'll need to be,
 (But it's leein' to say I'm glad),
I ken there's troubles that fowk maun dree,
An' the kelpie's no like to shift for me,
Sae, gin thae warlocks are fear'd o' Thee,
 Lord, mak' me a better lad !

BALTIC STREET

MY dainty lass, lay you the blame
 Upon the richtfu' heid ;
'Twas daft ill-luck that bigg'd yer hame
 The wrang side o' the Tweed.
Ye hae yer tocher a' complete,
 Ye're bonnie as the rose,
But I was born in Baltic Street,
 In Baltic Street, Montrose !

Lang syne on mony a waefu' nicht,
 Hie owre the sea's distress,
I've seen the great airms o' the licht
 Swing oot frae Scurdyness ;
An' prood, in sunny simmer blinks,
 When land-winds rase an' fell,
I'd flee my draigon ¹ on the links
 Wi' callants like mysel'.

¹ Fly my kite.

Oh, Baltic Street is cauld an' bare
An' mebbe nae sae grand,
But ye'll feel the smell i' the caller air
O' kippers on the land.
'Twixt kirk an' street the deid fowk bide
Their feet towards the sea,
Ill nee'bours for a new-made bride,
Gin ye come hame wi' me.

The steeple shades the kirkyaird grass,
The seamen's hidden banes,
A dour-like kirk to an English lass
Wha kens but English lanes ;
And when the haar, the winter through,
Creeps blind on close and wa'
My hame nicht get a curse frae you,
Mysel' get, mebbe, twa.

I'll up an' aff the morn's morn
To seek some reid-haired queyn,
Bauld-he'rted, strang-nieved,¹ bred an' born
In this auld toon o' mine.

¹ Strong-fisted.

And oh ! for mair I winna greet,
Gin we hae meal an' brose
And a but an' ben in Baltic Street,
In Baltic Street, Montrose !

BAILIE BRUCE

YE'D winder, when creation's plan
Seems sae acceptable to man,
And the Creator, in His power,
Made brute an' bird, an' fruit an' flower ;
When e'en the wasps that bigg their bike
An' clocks ¹ an' golachs, an' the like
O' a' yon vairmin has their use,
What gar'd Him fashion Bailie Bruce ?

He couldna thole to see a wean
Wheepin' his pearie ² on the green,
Nae sweethe'rts coorted but he saw
Auld Hornie's tail ahint the twa.
In godly wrath he aye wad show
His hate o' sinfu' men ; but tho'
The wicked fled afore his face
The guid aye passed them i' the race.

¹ Beetles.

² Whipping-top.

Oot frae the foremaist seat at kirk
He roared the psalms like ony stirk,
For gripp'd was he by sic a zeal
As nane but the elect micht feel ;
An' when the kirk-door plate was set,
Wi' looks o' pride ye'd ne'er forget,
When puir fowk laid their pennies doon
He'd gi'e his Maker half a croon.

Weel, whiles oor ancient customs change
An' fowk accep' what's new an' strange ;
Oor decent plate awa was laid
For bonny baggies—English made.
Sawbath cam' roond ; the kirk was in ;
The Bailie sat an' glow'ed on sin ;
The Elder brocht wi' reverent feet
His baggie to the foremaist seat.

In drapp'd the money ; Bailie Bruce
Wi' open hand an' purse-strings loose
And e'en upliftit, kept his place ;
The bag passed on its road o' grace.

Weel was't he couldna see the smile
That a' yon kirk-fu' had the while
Nor yet the Elder's twisted mou'
That wrocht him a' the journey through !

For oh ! ahint the Bailie's back
Was done a deed o' shame to mak'
His righteous he'rt wi' anger swell
Nane gie'd a bodle but himsel' !
An' at the coontin', plain to see,
The baggie held but ae bawbee !

.
His health noo gars him keep the hoose ;
Losh-aye ! what ails him, Bailie Bruce ?

CHARLEWAYN¹

*(Yestere'n was Hallowe'en,
To-day is Hallow-day,
It's nine free nights to Martinmas,
And then we'll get away.*

OLD SONG AMONG ANGUS FARM SERVANTS.)

FRAE Hallowe'en to Martinmas
There's little time to fill,
And yet there's mony a warkin' lass
Thinks a' the days stand still.

Oh, cauld the mornin' creeps on nicht
Along the eerie skies,
An' cauld the blink o' caun'le-licht
That lets me see to rise.

For late an' airly at the fairm
The wark seems niver past,
But a week, come Monday, brings the
tairm
When I may flit at last.

¹ Charles' Wain, the Plough.

My mither hauds her docters ticht,
My mither's hoose is sma',
An' I niver lo'ed my mither richt
Until I gaed awa.

But yestere'en was Hallowe'en
When a' may dance an' sing ;
The auld guidwife shut doon her e'en,
The young anes got their fling ;

Set up, the fiddler wrocht. Below,
The reel swang ilka ane,
But my feet danced oot to meet my joe
By the licht o' Charlewayn.

My mither's hame's a happy hame
Whaur easy I may lie,
And o' mysel' I'm thinkin' shame,
Sic a feckless queyn am I.

For, by the licht o' Charlewayn,
It's Rab that gar'd me lairn
To see a lover's lass mair plain
E'en than a mither's bairn.

Aye, yestere'en was Hallowe'en,
An' Martinmas is near ;
It's wae for Martinmas I've been
But it's like to find me here !

THE MUCKLE MOU'

WHEN ye are auld an' pitten past,
Ye'll whiles be sittin' wi' a freen'
And crackin', as ye hear the blast
Rage i' the lum, o' fowk ye've seen.
There's some gangs whingein',¹ singin' sma',
An' some that taks a baulder tune,
But ae thing's aye the same wi' a'—
Their mou's owre muckle for their spune.

Ye'll see a lad—his hoose the best,
A thrivin' swine in till his yaird,
His gairden fu'—he winna rest,
He's wud because he's no a laird!
He coorts a lass; she'll tak' her aith
He isna fit to dicht her shune,
What's wrang wi' ane is wrang wi' baith—
Their mou's owre muckle for their spune.

¹ Whining.

O' tinkler-fowk, an' fowk wi' means
 Ye'll scarcely hae the time to speak,
Men, wives an' widdies, lords an' weans,
 The mair they get, the mair they'll seek.
Ye'd think the vera warld was deav'd
 Wi' them that's roarin' for the mune,
Nae maitter what they've a' receiv'd
 Their mou's owre muckle for their spune.

But when ye've lookit mony a year
 Upon yersel' and ither men,
Although to lairn ye've whiles been sweir,
 There's twa-three things ye're like to ken ;
Ye winna need to mak' ado
 An' warstle wi' the powers abune,
Yer spune's the measure o' yer mou',
 Gin ane is wrang, it's no the spune !

THE GANGEREL

It's ye maun whustle for a breeze
Until the sails be fu' ;
They bigg yon ships that ride the seas
To pleasure fowk like you.

For ye hae siller i' yer hand
And a' that gowd can buy,
But weary, in a weary land,
A gangerel-loon am I.

Ye'll feel the strang tides lift an' toss
The scud o' nor'land faem,
And when ye drap the Southern Cross
It's a' roads lead ye hame.

And ye shall see the shaws o' broom
Wave on the windy hill,
Alang the strath the hairst-fields toom ¹
And syne the stackyairds fill.

¹ Empty.

Ye'll hear fu' mony a raittlin' cairt
On Forfar's causey-croon,¹
Wi' young stirks loupin' to the Mairt
That roars in Forfar toon.

O' nichts, ayont yer snibbet door,
Ye'll see in changeless band,
Abune Craig Oule, to keep Strathmore,
The stars of Scotland stand.

But tho' ye think ye sicht them fine
Gang ben an' tak' yer rest,
Frae lands that niver kent their shine
It's me that sees them best !

For they shall brak' their ancient trust,
Shall rise nae mair nor set,
The Sidlaw hills be laid in dust
Afore that I forget.

Lowse ye the windy-sneck a wheen,
An' glowre frae ilka airt
Fegs ! Ye may see them wi' yer een—
I see them wi' my he'rt !

¹ The middle of the street.

THE TINKLER'S BALOO

HAUD yer whisht, my mannie,
 Hide yer heid the noo;
There's a jimp young mune i' the branches abune
 An' she's keekin' at me an' you.
Near she is to settin',
 Waukin' she shouldna be,
An' mebbe she sees i' the loan by the trees
 Owre muckle for you an' me.

Dinna cry on Daddie,
 Daddie's by the fairm,
There's a specklie hen that strays i' the den
 An' he's fear'd she may come to hairm.
Thieves is bauld an' mony,
 That's what guid fowk say,
An' they'd a' complain gin the limmer was ta'en
 An' cheughit afore it's day.

Sleep, an' then, come Sawbath,
 A feather o' gray ye'll get
Wi' specklies on it to set i' yer bonnet
 An' gar ye look brawer yet.
Sae hide yer heid, my mannie,
 Haud yer whisht, my doo,
For we'll hae to shift or the sun's i' the lift
 An' I'm singin' baloo, baloo !

THE BANKS O' THE ESK

GIN I were whaur the rowans hang
 Their berried heids aside the river,
I'd hear the water slip alang,
 The rowan-leaves abune me shiver ;
And winds frae Angus braes wad sail
To blaw me dreams owre peat an' gale.

An' blawn frae youth, thae dreams o' mine
 Wad find me, tho' the rowans hide me,
Like hoolets gray they'd flit, an' syne
 They'd fauld their wings an' licht aside me ;
And aye the mair content I'd be
The closer that they cam' to me.

Aside the Esk I'd lay me doon,
 Atween the rowans and its windin',
An' tho' the waters rase to droon
 A weary carle, I'd no be mindin' ;
For I wad sleep, my rovin' past,
Upon thae banks o' dreams at last.

THE WISE-LIKE CHAP

AYE, billies, I'm a wise-like chap,
I dinna smoke nor drink,
And gin I gi'e my poke a slap
Ye'll hear the siller chink.
My feyther has an aicht-pair ¹ fairm
Weel set wi' byre an' stack ;
There's mony will obey me
An' tak' their pattern frae me,
But Annie winna hae me
An' my he'rt's near brak' !

My Grannie's saved a bit hersel',
She's three-score year an' ten,
Wha'll get the profit nane can tell
(An' yet I think I ken !)

¹ The size of Angus farms is expressed by the number of horses required to work them.

It's fules wad cross a rich auld wife,
Sae a' her fleers¹ I tak',
An' tho' it's like to pay me,
Richt little guid 'twill dae me,
For Annie winna hae me
An' my he'rt's near brak' !

Ye'll mebbe mind the miller's loon
That was a fair disgrace ;
His auld dune hat was clour'd abune
An' mill-dust on his face.
The gowk ! He gaed awa to fecht
And syne cam' crippl't back ;
Yestre'en he passed my Grannie
Wi' his left airm bandig't cannie—
But his richt ane happit Annie,
An' my he'rt's near brak' !

¹ Jibes.

INVERQUHARITY

ASIDE the Quharity burn
 I ken na what I'm seein'
 Wi' the licht near deein'
An' the lang year at the turn ;
 But the dog that gangs wi' me
 Creeps whingein' at my knee,
And we baith haud thegither
Like a lad an' his brither
 At the water o' Quharity.

Alang the Quharity glen
 I mind on warlock's faces,
 I' the still, dark places
Whaur the trees hae airms like men ;
 And I ken the beast can see
 Yon een that's watchin' me,
Whaur the arn-boughs darken
An' I'm owre fear'd to harken
 I' the glen o' Quharity.

INVERQUHARITY

By Quharity Castle wa's
The toor is like a prison,
Or a deid man risen
Amang the birken shaws ;
And the sweit upon my bree
Is drappin' cauld frae me
Till the ill spell's broken
By the Haly Word spoken
At the wa's o' Quharity.

Alang the Valley o' Deith
There'll be mony a warlock wait'n
Wi' the thrangin' hosts o' Sat'n
Till I tak' my hin' maist breith ;
An' I'm fear'd there winna be
The dog to gang wi' me
An' I doot the way is wearier
An' the movin' shadows eerier
Than the jaws o' Quharity.

But I'll whisper the Haly Name
For thae list'nin' lugs to hear me,
An' the herds o' Hell'll fear me
An' tak' the road they came ;

For the wild dark wings'll flee
Frae their bield in branch an' tree—
Nae mair the black airms thrawin' !
Nae mair the ill sough blawin' !
For my day o' days is dawin'
Owre the Castle o' Quharity !

FAUR-YE-WEEL

As ye come through the Sea-Gate ye'll find a
hoose we ken

Whaur, when a man is drouthy, his drouth an'
he gang ben,

And whiles o' nichts there's dancin' and aye
there's drink by day

And a fiddler-carle sits yonder an' gars his fiddle
play :

“ Oh come, ye ancient mariners,

Nae maitter soond or lame,

For tho' ye gae on hirplin'¹ tae

Ye'll syne gang dancin' hame ;

The years are slippin' past ye

Like water past the bows,

*Roond half the world ye've toss'd yer dram but sun e
ye'll hae to lowse.”*²

¹ Limping.

² To give up, to leave off.

The toon is like a picture, the sea is bonnie blue,
The fiddle's cryin' aff the shore to captain, mate,
an' crew,

An' them that's had for music the swirl o' gannet's
wings,

The winds that drive frae Denmark, they dootna
what it sings :

“ Oh come, ye dandy Baltic lads

That sail to Elsinore,

Ye're newly in, ye'll surely win

To hae a spree ashore ;

Lairn frae the sea, yer maister,

When fortune's i' ye're debt,

*The could waves washin' past the bar tak' a' that
they can get ! ”*

And when the quays are lichtit an' dark the ocean
lies,

The daft mune, like a feckless fule, keeks doon to
mock the wise ;

Awa' in quiet closes the fiddle's voice is heard

Whaur some that should be sleepin' are listenin'
for its word :

“ Sae haste ye noo, ye rovin’ queyns,
An’ gie yer dads the slip,
Tho’ dour auld men sit girnin’ ben
There’s young anes aff the ship,
Come, tak’ yer fill o’ dancin’,
Yer he’rts at hame maun bide,
*For the lad that tak’s a he’rt to sea will drap it owre
the side !”*

And aye the fiddle’s playin’, the auld bow wauks
the string,
The auld carle, stampin’ wi’ his fit, gies aye the
tune a swing ;
Gang East, gang West, ye’ll hear it, it lifts ye like
a reel :
*It’s niver dumb, an’ the tune sings “Come,” but
its name is Faur-ye-weel !*

POEMS IN ENGLISH

A YOUNG MAN'S SONG

My girl is true, my girl is sweet,
When in the town we chance to meet
It almost seems to me as though
A rose were growing in the street.

And if I see her in the lane,
Though winter's freezing might and main,
I half suspect, in spite of all,
That Spring's upon us once again.

When luck is out and things look blue
And folks are up against me too,
There's naught in that to cast me down
Because she trusts me through and through.

And at the altar-railings when
My faith and truth I swear, oh then
I'll pray, " God strike me if I fail—
So help me! World without end. Amen! "

THE SHADOWS

BOUGHS of the pine and stars between,
In woods where shadows fill the air,
Oh, who may rest that once has been
A shadow there ?

Sounds of the night and tears between,
The grey owl hooting, dimly heard ;
Can footsteps reach those lands unseen,
Or wings of bird ?

Days of the years and worlds between,
Still through the boughs the stars may
burn,
The heart may break for lands unseen,
For woods wherein its life has been,
But not return.

A WINTER PHANTASY

THE day was all delight,
Chorus and golden tune ;
Rides the steep night
The white ship of the moon.

Now that the night is come
And silence wakes to power,
All that was dumb
Has its triumphal hour.

My soul, behold a sail
The seas of Heaven upon,
Rise up and hail
That roving galleon.

High above winter frost
Speed on uncharted ways,
Enraptured, lost,
Past thrall of nights and days.

Burnt fervent-white with rime,
The blurred earth hangs beneath,
Frost-light sublime,
Frost-tapers lit for death.

Look down the mists and see
The orchards mazed with snow ;
Grey, tangled tree,
Lichen and mistletoe.

But, ere the dim world falls
Engulfed, upon your track,
Even at Heaven's walls,
Turn back, turn back !

And as the miles decrease,
By all that foils regret,
By all that is your peace,
My soul, forget.

MARSEY TOWN

As I came over the Hill of Clayne
Or ever the leaf was brown,
The wind blew light in the pods of broom,
For the gay, gold flower had lost its bloom,
And "O the jewel," I sang again,
"That's waiting in Marsey Town!"

The shadows raced on the sun-swept hill,
And dappled its ancient crown,
The kestrel hovered on wings outspread,
The rabbit slipped through the bracken-bed
And the world beat time as I sang my fill
And travelled to Marsey Town.

O foolish singer and foolish song!
The lure of a pinchbeck clown
Had thieved my jewel, my heart's own core,
My goal was gained, but I sang no more,
And I turned me home as the shades grew long
From the steeples of Marsey Town.

A lad came over the Hill of Clayne
A-singing as he stepped down—
Aye me ! forget what a fool has said,
For I called him “ I ” but he’s long, long
dead—
Dumb—gone like the sound of his own refrain
And buried in Marsey Town !

THE SEASONS

“ MOTHER, I know Spring bears her gifts
Of young buds scarce unfurled,
For through bare apple-boughs I see
The blue hills of the world ;
And the pale daffodils are set
Sharp, in the April light—— ”
“ The gift that Spring has brought to me
Is fight, my son, fight.”

“ And, Mother, on the heels of Spring
The seasons follow hard,
When Summer glorifies the field
And Autumn stacks the yard ;
Time was, I watched their gifts unroll,
And scarce could choose the best——”
“ The gift that I would have of them
Is rest, my son, rest.”

“ But, Mother, might they grant your boon
And were the conflict done,
O Mother, have you strength to stand——? ”
“ I would lie down, my son.”
“ Where would you look to ease your eyes
When strife with tears had ceas't ?
And whither would your feet be turned——? ”
“ East, my son, east.”

